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THE MUSICAL TIMES,

2nd Singing Class Circular.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1869.

THE LONDON MUSICAL SEASON.

BY HENRY C. LUNN.

WHENEVER a man boasts of his riches we may be pretty certain that he feels them an incumbrance, and knows but little how to manage them. The person who spends his wealth judiciously and calmly has little need for self-praise: he enjoys himself, and is the cause of enjoyment in others; and he neither covets nor receives thanks from those with whom he is associated. The vaunting prospectus of Messrs. Gye and Mapleson, issued at the commencement of the operatic season, is an apt illustration of the truth of these remarks. The list of vocalists gathered together by the fusion of the two establishments displayed a power not to be questioned; but when the golden promises of how that power was to be used were duly set forth, and the various operas were prospectively cast, with a reckless disregard of almost insurmountable difficulties only to be acquired by a long course of prospectus writing, experienced persons began to question the possibility of these results being attained, and to regret that the embarrassment caused by the possession of such wealth should extort from its owners a series of pledges which they could scarcely hope to redeem.

A calm review of the season will show that these doubts and fears were fully justified; for, in spite of the union of the two companies, very few satisfactory performances of the standard operas have been given; whilst the orchestra, decreased in effect by the secession of some of the best performers, although partially under the direction of a thoroughly competent artist, has been often nominally conducted by one who was himself conducted by the more experienced members of his band. If, as we have heard it said, the season has been a financial success, we are sorry for it, seeing that it has most unquestionably been an artistic failure. We yield to none in admiration of the exceptional talent either of Madame Patti or of Madlle. Nilsson; but to have these two artists brought forward alternately in their best characters, with anybody—or nobody—to support them, whilst the great works are merely occasionally put up to stop the mouths of some few dissenting subscribers, betrays a system of "starring," which, if pursued in future seasons, will assuredly prove as destructive to the lyric, as it has already proved to the dramatic, stage.

The singing of Madame Patti during the season has been beyond all praise. Her *Norina* in "Don Pasquale," *Rosina* in "Il Barbiere," *Zerlina* in "Don Giovanni," *Gilda* in "Rigoletto," and *Maria* in "La Figlia del Reggimento," are, both vocally and histrionically, most perfect realisations of these favourite characters; and her exquisite embodiment of *Dinorah*, in Meyerbeer's opera of that name, (a part in which she had not been heard for seven years,) may be recorded as one of the most thoroughly satisfactory events of the season, especially as the opera was in every other respect most efficiently represented. Excellent as Madlle. Nilsson was in most of the characters in which she appeared—especially as *Lucia*, in Donizetti's opera—her great triumph has been

Ophelia, in M. Ambroise Thomas's "Hamlet," a triumph which has carried the indifferent music of this work through one season, and will no doubt carry the mad scene in the fourth act, (the only really good portion of the opera,) through many others. Madlle. Ilma di Murska, as the heroine in Donizetti's "Linda di Chamouni," fully equalled, if she did not exceed, her former representations of that character; and as the Queen, in "Les Huguenots," and *Elvira*, in "I Puritani," she again displayed all those excellences and defects to which she has now accustomed us. Of Madlle. Titiens it need only be said that as *Leonora*, in "Fidelio," *Alice*, in "Roberto il Diavolo," and indeed, in all her well known parts during the season, she was as thoroughly effective as ever; and as *Fides*, in "Le Prophète," although the music is somewhat out of her register, she created so profound an impression as to be overwhelmed with applause. Of that provoking tenor, Signor Mongini, who sings at one time like a finished artist, and at another like a school-boy, it is indeed difficult to deliver an opinion. With such a voice, he ought to have become one of the greatest tenors on the operatic stage; but his want of judgment utterly prevents his doing himself justice; and his unfortunate tendency to exaggerate, causes a feeling of uneasiness amongst the audience which is fatal to his progress. As *Arnoldo*, in "Guglielmo Tell," he sang his very best; and as *John of Leyden*, in "Le Prophète," his very worst; the contrast, indeed, being so great as to astonish even those who knew, by experience, how little reliance could be placed upon his powers. Mr. Santley has materially advanced his already excellent position during the season. It would be needless to dwell upon the admirable manner in which he has sustained every character with which he has been entrusted; but a record of the session would be incomplete were we not to bestow the most unqualified praise upon his performance of *Hamlet*, in M. Ambroise Thomas's opera. We say *performance*, because his acting of this difficult part was fully equal to his singing; and both were infinitely superior to anything we have for years seen upon the operatic stage. Signor Tamberlik (who made his re-appearance after an absence of four years) was welcomed most cordially; and his singing of *John of Leyden*, in "Le Prophète," was an agreeable relief, after the spasmodic attempt of Signor Mongini to realise the part. Signor Bottero, and the opera in which he played the principal character, "Don Bucefalo," failed so obviously that we cannot but wonder how such a result could not be foreseen. Of those singers whom we have not mentioned, Mesdles. Sinico, Vanzini, Grossi, Scalchi, Locatelli, and Bauermeister; Signori Gardoni, Naudin, Bulterini, Corsi, Marino, Graziani, Bagagiolo, Cotogni, Ciampi, Foli, Tagliafico, Campi, Mr. Lyall, and others, who have often sustained subordinate, but not unimportant, parts, it is only necessary to say that they rendered most valuable aid whenever their services were called into requisition. The non-appearance of Madlle. Pauline Lucca, owing to illness, was no doubt a serious inconvenience to the lessees; but the best compensation that could possibly have been made for her absence would have been the using of the excellent materials at command to the greatest possible advantage. To the improvement in the chorus we bear willing testimony; and we sincerely hope that the reform in this important department may in future seasons be more thoroughly carried out. The loss of Sir Michael Costa—an artist with whom the position of the Royal

Italian Opera seems indissolubly linked—is a blow from which we believe the establishment will never recover; and we should be glad indeed if we could hear that the scheme now in contemplation for next season—in which we understand most of the vocalists of the now dis-united opera-houses are concerned—were to include the invaluable services of a conductor so deservedly honoured and respected.

The production of Rossini's "Messe Solennelle" may be cited as one of the principal events of the season. Our opinion on this work has already been freely expressed; an opinion which, despite kindly admonitions addressed to us by some of our contemporaries, remains unaltered. We are perfectly aware that Rossini has composed "Guillaume Tell;" and have no recollection of ever advancing one word against that opera: we also know that he has written "Il Barbiere," and the "Stabat Mater;" and have the utmost respect for all these compositions; but we should as soon think of accepting his Solemn Mass *because* he has written these works, as we should think of welcoming an epic poem by Mr. Charles Dickens because he has written the "Pickwick Papers," and "David Copperfield." Notwithstanding many beauties in Rossini's Mass, which we have already freely acknowledged, as an artistic work, we consider it a failure; and in spite of its temporary popularity, we have little doubt that Time will endorse our verdict.

Having persistently advocated the desirability of admitting all classes of music-lovers to performances which had been for so many years entirely supported by aristocratic amateurs, we need scarcely say with how much pleasure we welcome the removal of the Philharmonic Concerts to St. James's Hall. Here at last this excellent Society may extend its usefulness, and continue its honourable career with a less exclusive feeling than has hitherto guided it. The concerts, under the able direction of Mr. W. G. Cusins, have been this season uniformly good; and, as we understand, the subscription has largely increased. Already we see the commencement of a wholesome change in its management, and an obvious desire to welcome this change amongst the subscribers and the general public; for compositions which have been unaccountably neglected for years have been resuscitated with the utmost success; and even examples of the "Music of the future" have been occasionally introduced, and received with a cordiality which proves that concert-frequenterers must be very much before or very much behind the majority of their critics-teachers.

The establishment of the "Oratorio Concerts," conducted by Mr. Joseph Barnby, is another event upon which all who desire the spread of good music have reason to congratulate themselves. Birmingham has already shown us how by the training of a comparatively limited choir, the greatest sacred works can be rendered with a sublimity of effect which has been fully admitted by all competent judges; and if in the metropolis a body of vocalists of about the same number, constantly working under one conductor, can be relied upon to interpret the compositions of the great masters with equal success, there can be little doubt that such performances must ensure ready and cordial support. The production of Handel's "Jephtha" has proved how carefully and earnestly works new to the choir are practised; and the programme for next season will therefore be looked forward to with much interest, containing, as

it does, compositions of such importance as the "Passion Musik," of Bach, and Beethoven's Mass in D. Meanwhile we trust that the balance of voices in the choir will be carefully considered; that the tenors will be strengthened, and that the "diapason normal" (which let us hope will be rigidly adhered to) will be more thoroughly under the control of the orchestra.

Mr. Leslie's series of Concerts contained this season programmes of the utmost interest; and the excellence of his choir has been most successfully tested in the part-music selected at each performance. There is a special feature about this choir which should always command a large patronage; and the less Mr. Leslie relies upon other attractions, the more do we enjoy his concerts. The orchestral performances of the "New Philharmonic" have also been given with the usual amount of success, St. James's, instead of St. George's, Hall having been selected for the place of meeting; and the Monday Popular Concerts have also fully maintained their deservedly high reputation. It would be impossible to name even one half of the benefit concerts which have taken place during the season; but amongst the Pianoforte "Recitals" which have helped forward the knowledge of good music, we may mention those of Madame Arabella Goddard, Miss Agnes Zimmermann, and Mr. Charles Hallé. The Sacred Harmonic Society, although it has made no attempt to add to its *repertoire*, has given its accustomed series of concerts with an amount of success which such carefully directed performances of the standard works must always ensure.

The high character of the music at the Crystal Palace Concerts, so conscientiously conducted by Herr Manns, has been steadily maintained during the season; and the "Rossini Festival," directed by Sir Michael Costa, proved a fitting tribute to the memory of a composer whose death was amongst the notable events of the year. We may mention also that the experiment of performing operas in English has been attended with marked success; and we have every hope that should the attraction of these operas continue, something more than the re-production of well known works may be attempted; indeed it is possible that a National Opera might be gently nursed through its early years in this beautiful conservatory; and, when vigorous enough to be transplanted into the metropolis, that it might flourish with a success which seems unattainable without such aid.

We are glad to announce that the grant of £500 to the Royal Academy of Music, which was withdrawn by the late Government, has this year been restored; and it is only necessary to allude to the talent displayed by the pupils at the recent concert of the Institution, to prove how thoroughly well this small National support has been bestowed.

An article in our last number expresses our feelings with regard to what may be called "Music-hall" compositions; and we should not allude again to them were we not convinced that it is the duty of all interested in the healthy progress of music to take every opportunity of exposing the shallowness of their pretensions. When these Halls were first established, much was said about operative works, which had been neglected, being introduced to the public at low prices; and it was understood that if you could hear the music through the rattling of glasses, and see the vocalists through the tobacco-

smoke, a very agreeable evening might be spent. But vapid comic songs, sung by vapid comic singers, were soon found to mix better with "refreshments" than good music; and caricatured specimens of humanity, both male and female, therefore, not only assisted nightly in degrading an already degraded audience, but their portraits were paraded in the shop-windows, with the hope of enlightening the young ladies of the period as to the kind of persons who reigned supreme in "those horrid music-halls," into which custom could not by any means allow them to penetrate. The effect was at once apparent: if they could not have the singers, they would have the songs; and in a short time many of these senseless productions sold with a rapidity which must have astonished even those publishers who lent the weight of their names to so questionable a speculation. Not content with this success, however, the vocalists themselves—intoxicated with a patronage which was headed by one whose countenance of real art and artists might have been of the utmost service—began to consider themselves as persons of vast importance; and the late public performance of their absurdities (given at the very room in which the Philharmonic and Monday Popular Concerts take place), seems to prove that, so far from endeavouring to follow out the original design of elevating the music-hall into a concert-room, the desire now is to lower the concert-room into a music-hall. We have little doubt that in time the evil will cure itself. Like the "amateur casual," who made himself a martyr for the enlightenment of his fellow creatures, we have lately gone through an entire "comic concert;" and only at the interval of a month, find our cheerfulness gradually returning. "Laugh and grow fat" is a healthful motto; but we are convinced, by sad experience, that any amount of obesity gained by a constant attendance at the music-halls will certainly be traced to the "refreshments," and not to the music.

Our reviewing columns will amply prove that, although innumerable compositions are still published, tending to lower the character of the art, there is an evident desire amongst the better class of writers to produce pieces framed upon the models which have been selected as the most durable by the classical composers. "Young ladies' music" is the growth of the period; and the rise of it dates from the time when young ladies, as a rule, included what is called "music" amongst the many accomplishments which the tyrant Fashion compelled them to study at school. That this item in their daily drudgery has hitherto had but little to do with the art, in its highest sense, is scarcely to be brought as a charge so much against the pupils as against the teachers; for as compositions written for the fingers, instead of the mind, generally satisfy both children and parents, it becomes the duty of those who know better than either to cultivate the musical faculty to a comprehension of the works of those who have written, not for a day, but for all time. "Drawing-room music" always represents the character of the drawing-room in which it is played; and before we can hope to introduce more intellectual works, therefore, we must form more intellectual beings to execute and listen to them. The reign of common-place can only exist as long as people know no better; and the advance in a knowledge of good pianoforte works, mainly caused by the many "Recitals" given during the season, ought to act as a warning to those who

desire that grown children should rest satisfied with musical toys. A re-action in favour of a higher order of music is rapidly setting in, even in schools; and teachers who have existed upon the ignorance of those whom it is their duty to instruct, must endeavour, therefore, to move with the times, or they may be compelled to submit before long to be taught by their pupils.

THE STORY OF MOZART'S REQUIEM.

BY WILLIAM POLE, F.R.S., MUS. DOC., OXON.

(Continued from p. 170.)

CHAP. V.—*Conclusions in respect to the Authorship of the Requiem.*

IN conclusion, now that we know all that we are likely to know of the history of the Requiem, it is desirable to sum up the evidence we have as to the part which Mozart had in its composition.

We may consider it absolutely demonstrated that the work was not completed by Mozart. The manuscript which at one time led to that belief has been proved to be a forgery by internal evidence, and the external testimony entirely corroborates this judgment. He was interrupted by the hand of death in writing out a copy; that imperfect copy is preserved, bearing the most positive signs of being what it is stated to be, and it is impossible reasonably to believe that any perfect copy could have been prepared by him, or to doubt that the completed copy must have been written by Süßmayer.

To explain clearly the state of the evidence in regard to the authorship, it is necessary to divide the work off into three portions, as follows:—

- A.—PORTIONS KNOWN TO BE ENTIRELY MOZART'S—
No. 1. Requiem and Kyrie.
- B.—PORTIONS KNOWN TO BE ESSENTIALLY MOZART'S—
No. 2. Dies Iræ.
3. Tuba mirum.
4. Rex tremendæ.
5. Recordare.
6. Confutalis.
Part of No. 7. Lacrymosa, namely, the first eight bars.
8. Domine Jesu.
9. Hostias.
- C.—PORTIONS IN WHICH IT IS NOT POSITIVELY KNOWN THAT MOZART HAD ANY PART AT ALL—
No. 7. From the ninth bar to the end.
10. Sanctus.
11. Benedictus.
*12. Agnus Dei.

We will offer a few remarks on each of these heads.

A. The first class refers to those portions of the work which are known to be entirely Mozart's, having been completed by him. This class unfortunately comprises only one number, the *Requiem and Kyrie*. These, in the original manuscript, formed a part of the score delivered to Count Wallsegg, and about them there can be no question.

B. The second class comprises the portions which are known to be *essentially* Mozart's work, having been completed by him in the more important parts, but left unfinished in the less important ones. The essential features were all either completed or clearly indicated. The vocal parts were written out fully, together with the fundamental bass completely figured. The instrumental accompaniments were the only parts left unfinished. These were always put in where they had to go without the voices; and where they had to accompany the voices the commencement

* No. 13 may be excluded from consideration, being merely a repetition of No. 1.